

When Beckett on Film migrated to television

Article

Published Version

Creative Commons: Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 4.0

Open Access

Bignell, J. (2020) When Beckett on Film migrated to television. Књижевна историја (Literary History), 51 (169). pp. 97-108. ISSN 0350-6428 doi: <https://doi.org/10.18485/kis.2019.51.169.5> Available at <https://centaur.reading.ac.uk/90614/>

It is advisable to refer to the publisher's version if you intend to cite from the work. See [Guidance on citing](#).

Identification Number/DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18485/kis.2019.51.169.5>
<<https://doi.org/10.18485/kis.2019.51.169.5>>

Publisher: Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade

All outputs in CentAUR are protected by Intellectual Property Rights law, including copyright law. Copyright and IPR is retained by the creators or other copyright holders. Terms and conditions for use of this material are defined in the [End User Agreement](#).

www.reading.ac.uk/centaur

CentAUR

Central Archive at the University of Reading

Reading's research outputs online

WHEN *BECKETT ON FILM* MIGRATED TO TELEVISION

University of Reading

Abstract: In the migration of drama from one medium to another a text is reshaped, and different audiences are addressed by adaptations because of the process of remediation. This article evaluates the significance of the intermedial migrations that happened to the *Beckett on Film* project in which Samuel Beckett's 19 theatre plays were performed on stage, then filmed for an international festival, then shown on television in the UK, USA, Ireland and elsewhere. The analysis focuses on the television versions and shows how their distribution and reception contexts framed their meanings in different ways, and assesses how medial migration destabilised the object of analysis itself at the same time as the work became able to address multiple audiences and fulfil different cultural roles.

Keywords: Beckett, intermediality, television, film, theatre, media, drama, Britain, Ireland, audience

Travelling from theatre to cinema

Beckett on Film is a fascinating example of the tensions in transnational, intermedial, convergent media in the 21st century, and the first point to note about it is that it is not a single entity; not a work but an assemblage of disparate texts. The season was made up of separate films involving different teams of people, even though the films were grouped under a collective title and were shown in the manner of an irregular series on television. In the cinema, the films were also grouped together under a common title, an extremely unusual procedure that occurred because they were presented (as the theatre plays had been) as a festival. The grouping of the dramas raises questions about their interrelationships, their branding via their author's name and their medium. Beckett's name functions as a unifying brand that holds the different texts together, but he never appears in any of the films so the title '*Beckett on Film*' is, in a way, rather misleading. Similarly, the designation '*on Film*' unites the dramas in terms of their transition into the film medium but suggests that they come from elsewhere, from a different medium. These are texts that have travelled out of theatre and into somewhere else. Some of the dramas draw attention to specific antecedent texts, or reference experimentation in the media of theatre, film or television by reflexively remarking on medial conventions. But rather than using these origins as stable material that would then be transformed, and still less as authoritative 'keys' to the

meanings of the *Beckett on Film* versions, they are in tension with each other and with the activity of transformation, adaptation or allusion. The title and conception of *Beckett on Film* raise questions of belonging, identity and categorisation (Bignell 2009: 82-87).

In contrast to this instability, the production of the *Beckett on Film* series took place because of its originators' desire for permanence (Frost and McMullan 2003: 216-217), and it was a kind of permanence associated strongly with place. Michael Colgan, Artistic Director of the Gate Theatre, Dublin, was the animating force behind the production in Dublin, as part of an international Beckett festival, of all 19 of Beckett's stage plays in the period 1-20 October 1991. The festival had financial backing from the Irish public service broadcaster RTE (Radio Telefís Éireann) and Trinity College, Dublin, where Beckett studied for his degree. The Gate productions were periodically revived and toured, staged in 1996 at the Lincoln Center, New York, in 1997 in an abbreviated form in Melbourne, Australia, and in full at the Barbican Centre, London, in 1999. The Gate Theatre presents itself as a National Theatre of Ireland, and since the stage productions had originated there, Colgan and the production team wanted to present Beckett as an Irish writer but also to involve international performers and directors, befitting their understanding of Beckett as at once Irish and 'universal' (Saunders 2007: 80-81). Ireland, however, was to be firmly established as Beckett's 'home'.

The question of whether Beckett 'belonged' to the Irish nation or to some other country was reflected in the project's personnel; international directors behind the camera were often working with characters explicitly represented as being Irish, portrayed with Irish accents and often by Irish actors. This partly because the *Beckett on Film* recordings made use of many (though not all) of the actors from the Gate Theatre's season (Saunders 2007: 92-93). The Irish actors Johnny Murphy and Barry McGovern played Vladimir and Estragon in *Waiting for Godot* for example, supported by the Irish resident Alan Stanford as Pozzo. The Irish actress Rosaleen Linehan played Winnie in *Happy Days*, and the Irishman David Kelly (known in Britain for his roles as stereotypical sitcom Irishmen, in the restaurant comedy *Robin's Nest* for example) played A in *Rough for Theatre I*, having also taken the lead in the 1991 Dublin stage version of *Krapp's Last Tape*. *Endgame's* director was the Irish playwright Conor McPherson (writer of the internationally successful Irish-set play *The Weir*), and Irish film director Neil Jordan directed *Not I*. In *Endgame*, British actors Michael Gambon and David Thewlis imitated Dublin accents. The aim of foregrounding Beckett's Irishness in *Beckett on Film* not only repudiated possible claims of his Englishness but also his Frenchness. Many of the plays were written in French and only later translated into English, and Beckett lived in France for most of his adult life. Over 20 years before the Gate's festival of Beckett's theatre, there had been a similar retrospective at the Théâtre Récamier in Paris in 1970. Later, in 1981,

the Festival d'Automne in Paris marked Beckett's birthday with a theatre season, academic conference and a season of his film and television work (Saunders, 2007: 86). But *Beckett on Film* made no acknowledgement of these other potential national identities for Beckett and his work.

The co-producer of *Beckett on Film*, Alan Moloney, explained that the initial intention was to record the 1991 Dublin stage versions, and as the international tours of the productions continued, this aim to create a permanent record of them appeared increasingly desirable. However, in tension with this aim, Moloney sought a form that would give the recordings 'a cinematic feel, rather than just filmed plays' (Sierz, undated). Right at the start, the project inhabited a tension between the theatrical and the filmic, which were understood as being different. Some of the funding for *Beckett on Film* came from the Irish Film Board, a public body subsidising film production in Ireland, especially of films perceived to have an overseas appeal. But there was no take-up of cinema distribution rights for the project as the producers had initially hoped: the season did not 'travel' as an overseas export. Funding also came from the Irish broadcaster RTE, and the other co-producers were a partnership of the Irish companies Blue Angel Productions and Tyrone Productions. Tyrone had produced the stage dance spectacular *Riverdance* in 1994 and was expert at exploiting Irishness internationally; *Beckett on Film* was expected to contribute to the export of Irishness alongside other cultural exports such as Irish pubs or St Patrick's Day parades. As Graham Saunders (2007: 80–81) has noted, accented productions (like the BBC Television Shakespeare series (1978–85)) claim dramatists and their dramas as 'universal' and simultaneously locate them nationally by assimilating accentual neutrality. This belies the transnational co-production culture that facilitates such projects. The BBC Shakespeare was a co-production with US finance (the Exxon Mobil oil company, MetLife insurance and J. P. Morgan bank) and *Beckett on Film* was a joint enterprise involving the British Channel 4 television channel. *Beckett on Film* was launched at Dublin Castle, where the invited guests matched the simultaneous Irishisation and internationalisation of the product. They included The Edge – lead guitarist from U2, the pop group The Corrs as well as the pop singers Marianne Faithfull and Lisa Stansfield, who both lived in Ireland despite their English origins (Saunders 2007: 88). The branding of *Beckett on Film* as this kind of high-cultural export is as significant to its production, reception and impact as its reading of specific Beckett plays.

The filmed *Beckett on Film* plays fall between the two stools of being 'faithful' to the texts and being accessible to the audience. In order to make them suitable for cinema screening as well as television broadcast the producers made them more 'cinematic': the plays were shot on film cameras (rather than video) for greater colour density, contrast and depth of field so they looked suitable for large cinema screens. They were shot in large film studios, and in contrast to the often bare staging used in The

Gate Theatre's Beckett season, the film directors tended to fill in the empty space in their studios with props and settings, thus removing some of the abstraction of the theatre texts as written and as usually performed. This kind of adaptation for the assumed demands of another medium is exactly what Beckett himself disliked. For example, in a letter of 23 March 1975 Beckett wrote to his friend the theatre director Alan Schneider, referring to the filming of the Schiller Theatre stage production of *Waiting for Godot* in Berlin that year (Harmon 1998: 324): "Berlin wasn't too bad in the end. We were nearly there. There will be a film of a performance, purely documentary, no *adaphatroce*" [atrocious adaptation]. Beckett usually opposed adapting theatre plays for broadcast or cinema exhibition unless he approved detailed plans for the production or had a major role in the adaptation and direction himself. The *Beckett on Film* plays are certainly adaptations, and the most effective of them offer meta-commentary on their medial transformations.

There is no consistency in how the productions adopt spatial conventions deriving from theatre, television or film. The *Beckett on Film* presentation of *Rockaby*, featuring Penelope Wilton, is set in a room which is dressed as a realistic location and which is entered from outside by the camera. After this opening establishing shot representing the whole of the performer's body, the drama settles down to focus on the lighted area of her mouth with the rest of her face and the background in shadow. The domestic setting confined within a room, and the apparently confessional diary form of the woman's monologue has greater affinity with television than with cinema, via for example the confessional speech of television documentary. Long shots of Wilton's body alternate with close-ups of hands, also a conventional means in television documentary to signify emotion and also to function as bridges where edits in the soundtrack need to be concealed by a change of image. On the other hand, the *Beckett on Film* season's *Act Without Words II* was a stage mime that is converted into a pastiche of a silent film short. One after another, two men emerge from sacks when they are prodded by a stick. Like a sequence of vaudeville turns, each in a different performance style, they perform actions such as dressing and tasting a carrot. The film alludes to the early Edison shorts that presented brief sequences of action using one or two performers, often with a comic intention. Leading in the direction of television and film respectively, these two productions confuse any consistent attribution of screen versions of Beckett's plays to the conventions of a specific medium or historical period.

The theatre version of *Play* consists of three heads, of two women and a man (W1, W2 and M), protruding from three large urns positioned facing the audience. As a single light illuminates each head, by turns the figures tell the garbled story of a love-triangle, seemingly compelled by the light to speak as if in perpetual atonement for betrayal. *Play* is a self-conscious reference to the conventions of theatre (McMullan 1993:

17–25), both because of its title and its emphasis on the positioning of the performers and the audience as speakers and witnesses. Anthony Minghella's direction of the *Beckett on Film* version foregrounds the play's references to Dante's account of the torments of sinners in the underworld by placing M, W1 and W2 among a large group of other urns seen in wide shot. The film references both theatre and literature. The camera fulfils the functions of the light in the theatre version, but because it also supplies the viewers with a point of view it also parallels the camera with an observing eye (as the camera, E, had done in Beckett's 1964 *Film*). In the theorisation of identification in cinema by Christian Metz (1982) (often extended to television), one type is the identification of the spectator with the cinematic apparatus, and the other is the viewer's identification with characters on the screen. Inasmuch as the camera in the *Beckett on Film* version of *Play* seems to force the characters to speak, this connects the camera and the audience together and draws on the conventional identification between the spectator and the camera in cinema and television. However, the fragmentary nature of the piece, its repetitions, the performance style and visual appearance of the performers, and the attention drawn to the medium of recording all conspire to withdraw the second conventional identification, which is that between the spectator and a character. Here the camera and the spectator are active and the look is an action that makes something happen; the characters must speak when looked at. Far from being a 'documentary' record of a theatre performance, the intervention made by adapting *Play* into a film version is signalled by the way the camera becomes an agent and not a witness. *Play* self-consciously points to a migration between media.

The *Beckett on Film* version of *Play* opens with written titles in white on black, with a countdown of frames such as would be seen on the leader strip of a film as it is fed into a cinema projector. Visual space is relatively fluid, with the camera panning and tilting, and cuts as the camera moves closer to or further from the actors, to one side of them, above them or behind them. The full range of shots is used, from extreme long shot and overhead shot to extreme close-up. Movement is also evident in the frequent reframing within shots where, for example, a whole face is initially shown and then the camera zooms and pans slightly to reveal a facial detail such as a mouth. Occasionally images are in negative, there are cuts and joins in the strip of celluloid, and at brief moments the strip of film seems to be broken and reveals the white light of a projector. There is attention to the material of film, and its projection in cinema, as well as to the possibilities of camera position and movement, and the relationship of these to montage, editing and narrative structure. Minghella's film is self-consciously about its medial identity, or, more accurately, identities in the plural.

Neither image nor speech are offered as means of full revelation of meaning, and instead there is an attention to repetition, deferral and ap-

parent lack of mastery over the action and how it is recorded. As McMul-lan (1993: 21) argued of the theatre version, “strategies of representation, rather than producing knowledge, truth and enlightenment, are revealed as arbitrary mechanisms of discipline and control”. In the theatre version of *Play*, the repetition of the dialogue can be regarded as an allusion to the simultaneous repeatability of plays in a run of performances, and also to the unrepeatability of each live performance. Minghella’s production for *Beckett on Film* recasts this idea in cinematic and televisual terms. Films and television dramas are made by performing a number of takes of the same sequence. The film or television programme is the product of a series of repetitions, only one of which will make it to the final cut. Furthermore, television programmes are repeated, and films are shown in repeat screenings. The production of *Play* from a series of disconnected repetitions, and the repeatability of the programme itself once completed, are alluded to by the foregrounding of the celluloid film strip from which it is made and which can be re-shown. The apparent materiality of the film’s physical base also emphasises the notion of the cinematic, in comparison and contrast to the televisual and the theatrical. Making, showing and repeating become ways of both linking and separating cinema from television and from theatre, even as *Play* migrates between them. This *Play* sits between television and film, and alludes to both theatre and literature. Moreover, as Paul Lawley (1984) has argued, the structure of the dialogue follows a fugue or canon pattern, and so makes links between drama and music. In various ways, this is a multimedia, intermedial work. Furthermore, the apparent marks of the filmic are post-production effects and not the result of the operation of the camera itself, or of a projector, so the adaptation is also at home in the world of the digital, the immaterial and the virtual.

Beckett on Film on television

Beckett on Film was screened on PBS in the USA in *Stage on Screen*, an anthology series of varied theatre adaptations. The plays were also broadcast on German and Dutch television, without subtitles, gaining some overseas distribution which assisted with the production’s costs. As investors, Channel 4 and RTE had a closer relationship with the production and benefitted from more extensive rights to screen the series on their own channels in the UK and Ireland respectively (Bignell 2015: 130-1). Channel 4’s investment in the Beckett season is to some extent consistent with the channel’s original remit yet marks an interesting difference from the terms of its foundation in the early 1980s (Greenhalgh, 1998: 65-67). Channel 4 was devised with a large and guaranteed income from a share of the advertising revenues of the commercial Independent Television (ITV) companies, yet with an injunction from government not to pursue large audiences and thus compete with ITV. Channel 4 had to be distinctively different, innovative, catering for minorities and articulating

non-mainstream concerns. This role meant that marginal and potentially radical broadcasting could be allowed yet constrained, with no threat to the established broadcasting duopoly of BBC and ITV. By the 2000s there was audience fragmentation created by competition in the multi-channel environment, advertisers sought out valuable niche markets and political and economic change made the media industries unstable. These factors affected how Channel 4 broadcast the *Beckett on Film* season.

Michael Kustow, the first Commissioning Editor for the Arts on Channel 4, came to the channel from the National Theatre, and before that from a post as Director of the Institute of Contemporary Arts. Drama on Channel 4 aimed to be immediate, innovative and consciously televisual, as seen in, for example, *Nicholas Nickleby* (adapted from Dickens by playwright David Edgar, 1982) which mixed the 'live' relay of theatre performance with a version of the classic novel told through ensemble performance based on alternative theatre practice. In *The Mysteries* (adapted from medieval sources by the poet Tony Harrison, 1985), the conventions of multi-camera outside broadcast of sports events or rock concerts were used to present an epic promenade performance. Similarly, in *A TV Dante*, created by the painter Tom Phillips in collaboration with the film-maker Peter Greenaway in 1989, state-of-the-art post-production methods were used to present Dante's text using montage, overlays, animations, voice-over commentary and picture-within-picture.

By 2001, however, Channel 4 was competing much more directly with BBC2 on a range of programmes designed for attractive niche audiences, in particular the 18–25 year-old audience of such programmes as *Friends* and *Big Brother*, and its *Film on Four* production company that made cinema films had failed to move from low-budget films to Hollywood-scale productions and was scaled down radically in 2002. The ambitions of Channel 4 had become much more conservative, and much more conscious of audience value, because the channel had been empowered to sell its own advertising and make its own money. These various pressures and problems were directly reflected in the fate of *Beckett on Film* when Channel 4 took up its rights to schedule the plays on television.

The first British television screenings of *Beckett on Film* in 2001 were on Channel 4 in an irregular collection of schedule positions in either the early or late evening. While the plays were sometimes advertised by trailers before broadcast, presenting them as a special arts event, it was difficult for viewers to know more than a few days in advance when they would be shown, and they bore no obvious relation to the channel's normal scheduling policy. They were neither part of a regular series of drama programming nor connected to arts magazine programmes (like BBC's *Arena* or *Lively Arts* series in which Beckett's plays had been shown from the 1960s onwards) or dramas by other writers. Individual *Beckett on Film* plays were broadcast singly, in different slots of unequal length rather than as a package at a consistent time of day. The uncertain relation-

ship between the plays and the rest of the channel's output, and the unconventional pattern of scheduling, must have contributed to the season's low ratings and confusion about which viewers the plays were aimed at. This first showing of the *Beckett on Film* season harks back to some extent to British broadcasters' policy to mix programmes together in the schedule so that audiences might come across them by chance and be stimulated by relatively demanding programmes that would be challenging and worthwhile. This kind of scheduling is now rare in British television and belongs to a pre-1980 conception of Public Service Broadcasting in which the audience is conceived as a citizenry whose cultural knowledge and involvement could be gently raised by insinuating 'quality' material amongst popular entertainment (Bignell 2010: 137-138). That attitude had largely disappeared by 2001.

In Ireland, as well as in Britain, *Beckett on Film* was not very successful on television. RTE has public service aims that are similar to the BBC's, and it is funded by a public licence fee as well as by advertising. The broadcaster supports what are perceived as the cultural traditions and national identity of its audience, broadcasting traditional seasonal festivals, folk music and programming about writers and the arts (as well as a conventional mixed programme schedule). RTE programming thus not only reflects this perceived Irishness but also constitutes it, especially in the case of traditions re-invented to satisfy a national hunger for identity, such as Irish dancing. RTE screened *Beckett on Film* from 19 March to 2 April 2001, but in Northern Ireland the plays could be seen only on satellite and cable services, since terrestrial broadcasting was limited to Eire itself. This vitiated some of the series' ambitions for national status and national cultural unification around Beckett as a totem of Irish achievement.

In the same way as Channel 4 had done in Britain, RTE grouped the plays into blocks, with the exception of the longer dramas, and their audience sizes were uniformly disappointing (Saunders 2007: 92) as a proportion of the country's 4 million population at the time. Damien O'Donnell's *What Where*, Walter Asmus's *Footfalls* and John Crowley's *Come and Go* were screened as a single programming block, gaining an audience of 121,000. Patricia Rozema's *Happy Days* and Conor McPherson's *Endgame* were shown as single presentations and attracted 87,000 and 92,000 viewers respectively. The programme featuring Atom Egoyan's *Krapp's Last Tape*, shown alongside Enda Hughes's *Act Without Words II*, had the highest rating of any of the programmes at 136,000 viewers and was the earliest programme in the evening schedule for the *Beckett on Film* season, beginning at 9.30 pm. David Mamet's *Catastrophe*, Katie Mitchell's *Rough for Theatre II* and Damien Hirst's *Breath* were also grouped together, as were Richard Eyre's *Rockaby*, Karel Reisz's *Act Without Words I* and Charles Garrad's *That Time*. Two further compilations comprised Charles Sturridge's *Ohio Impromptu*, Kieron Walsh's *Rough for Theatre I* and Neil Jordan's *Not I*, and also Enda Hughes' *Act Without*

Words II, Robin Lefevre's *A Piece of Monologue* and Anthony Minghella's *Play*. The timing of all the broadcasts was outside conventional prime-time, and their audience ratings were comparatively low. *Krapp's Last Tape* and *Act Without Words II* were presented in the earliest slot of any of the plays, at 9.30 pm, and the rest were shown after 10.00 pm. The audience size for even the most popular of the plays (*Krapp's Last Tape* with *Act Without Words II*) compared very poorly to the much larger audience for the British soap opera *EastEnders* (460,000 viewers) that evening on RTE, and the subsequent programme, the Irish-produced soap *Fair City* (743,000 viewers). Beckett's most famous play, Michael Lindsay Hogg's version of *Waiting for Godot*, was screened at 10.30 pm and had a recorded audience of only 87,000.

The second period in which the *Beckett on Film* adaptations were shown on British television was quite different in character to the first. By 2004, the plays were being scheduled as if they were educational broadcasts for schools, with an explicitly pedagogic address to the audience. Listings magazines such as the *Radio Times* grouped all of the day's Channel 4 programmes for schools together in one block of text, giving information such as programme titles and starting times and noting the age group for which each programme was intended, as an aid to teachers or parents. In the week of Saturday 28 February to Friday 5 March 2004, for example, Channel 4 showed the *Beckett on Film* productions in their schools programme slot in the middle of weekday mornings. The plays were aimed at secondary school students studying the plays in their English or Drama syllabus. On Thursday 4 March, the *4Learning* educational slot from 9.30 am to 12.00 pm included four *Beckett on Film* plays. They were preceded (at 10.40 am) by a programme for English literature students aged 7–11, *What's So Good About J.K. Rowling*, which discussed the Harry Potter novels. At 10.55 am, *What Where* appeared, with a 14–19-year-old age group suggested as its audience. That would be students taking GCSE examinations (at age 16) or the final school examinations that qualify children for university. Following *What Where*, and filling the rest of the educational programmes slot, came *Footfalls*, *Come and Go*, and *Act Without Words II*, with the same suggested age of audience. The plays were not being offered to a general audience but were resources for study.

On television, Beckett's work had very poor audience ratings, made no impact on the host channel's audience share in competition with other channels, and was not part of a strategy to retain audiences across a sequence of programming (Voigts-Virchow 2000/2001). But clearly these were not significant considerations for Channel 4 or RTE, the broadcasters that invested in the production and distribution of *Beckett on Film*. Britain's tradition of Public Service Broadcasting means that television is expected to disseminate valuable cultural experiences in a democratic and socially useful way (Brunsdon 1990: 67–69). Beckett's work benefited from this ideology, but the *Beckett on Film* series became largely restrict-

ed to a narrowly pedagogical function. It became a DVD box-set for solitary home viewing, primarily in the educational market, rather than television that would be broadcast for collective audiences. The repetition of the *Beckett On Film* adaptations on television and their presence on several platforms affects the significance and cultural role of these productions. BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Five were spending, on average, 15% less money on new children's programming in 2013 than in 2008, for example, because they were showing repeats of older programmes and relying on teachers' and learners' use of online resources like YouTube (Ofcom, 2014: 10). Accessibility and repetition have the positive effects of finding new audiences and fostering a sense of belonging to an international and trans-generational community constituted around a canon of drama that prominently features Beckett's work. But the availability of *Beckett On Film* as the primary source for teachers and learners might also limit the scope for audience interpretations and the greater accessibility of the plays on screen can displace opportunities for reading them or seeing live performances, especially since the supply of books and visits to theatres are threatened by the erosion of school budgets in Austerity Britain.

Funding for public services in Britain, including for education, has been cut after the international banking crash of 2008, and the role of *Beckett On Film* in an educational context is an aspect of how the worth and significance of theatre in particular, and culture in general, has been and is being (re)negotiated. Increased access can work alongside neo-liberal paucity of opportunity and cultural breadth. However, at least *Beckett On Film* for schools found new value in a cultural product that had been relatively unsuccessful in cinema and broadcast television for a general audience. And on YouTube, the adaptations have become a public resource, fulfilling the public service ambitions that television broadcasters have increasingly abandoned. The project crossed national borders and was dependent on economic relationships between different national broadcasters and production companies, as well as cast and production staff whose nationality sometimes impacted on the realization, marketing and reception of the dramas. Beckett is an international figure, and study of the transnational and intermedial context of *Beckett on Film* illuminates the variant ways in which his persona and work have gained (or failed to gain) cultural visibility, and the aesthetic, institutional and economic networks that enable these transfers, journeys and migrations to occur.

Summary

The UK television channel Channel 4 invested in the production of *Beckett on Film* (2001), a project to produce screen versions of all Beckett's theatre plays; this was a project that linked different media. The films were shown in cinemas internationally, in London and New York, but had always been intended to migrate to the television medium. In 2001

Channel 4 television in Britain scheduled the *Beckett on Film* adaptations in the early or late evening, for a general family audience, but their timing bore no obvious relation to the channel's normal programming pattern. The uncertain relationship between the plays and the rest of the channel's output, and the unconventional scheduling, contributed to small audience numbers and confusion about which viewers the plays were aimed at. Then *Beckett on Film* migrated again, when in 2004 the plays were scheduled as educational broadcasts for schools television, on weekday mornings. They were aimed at secondary school children studying Beckett's plays in the English or Drama syllabus. Published listings noted the age group for which each drama was intended, to help teachers or parents. *Beckett on Film* had become a resource for study. This paper analyses how this process of migration between media and between types of audience happened, and why it is significant. The paper argues that these inter-medial migrations destabilise *Beckett on Film* as an object of analysis, but they also demonstrate the extent to which Beckett's work had the capacity to address multiple audiences and fulfil different cultural roles.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bignell, Jonathan. *Beckett on Screen: The Television Plays*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009.
- Bignell, Jonathan. "Into the Void: Beckett's Television Plays and the Idea of Broadcasting." *Beckett and Nothing: Trying to Understand Beckett*, edited by Daniela Caselli, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010, pp. 125-42.
- Bignell, Jonathan. "Performing Right: Legal Constraints and Beckett's Plays on BBC Television." *Samuel Beckett Today / Aujourd'hui* no. 27, 2015, pp. 129-41.
- Brundson, Charlotte. "Problems with Quality." *Screen* vol. 31, no. 1, 1990, pp. 67-90.
- Frost, Everett and Anna McMullan. "The Blue Angel *Beckett on Film* Project: Questions of Adaptation, Aesthetics, and Audience in Filming Samuel Beckett's Theatrical Canon." *Drawing on Beckett: Portraits, Performances and Cultural Contexts*, edited by Linda Ben-Zvi, Tel Aviv: Assaph Books, 2003, pp. 215-38.
- Greenhalgh, Suzanne. "The Mysteries at the National Theatre and Channel 4: Popular Theatre into Popular Television." *Boxed Sets: Television Representations of Theatre*, edited by Jeremy Ridgman, Luton: John Libbey, 1998, pp. 63-88.
- Harmon, Maurice. *No Author Better Served: The Correspondence of Samuel Beckett and Alan Schneider*. Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Lawley, Paul. "Beckett's Dramatic Counterpoint: A Reading of *Play*." *Journal of Beckett Studies*, no. 9, 1984, pp. 25-41.

- McMullan, Anna. *Theatre on Trial: Samuel Beckett's Later Drama*. London: Routledge, 1993.
- Metz, Christian. *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema*, trans. Ben Brewster, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982.
- Ofcom. *Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report*. https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0027/76266/childrens_2014_report.pdf. London: Office of Communications, 2014.
- Saunders, Graham. (2007), "Reclaiming Sam for Ireland: The *Beckett on Film* Project." *Irish Theatre in England*, edited by Richard Cave and Ben Levitas, Dublin: Carysfort, pp. 79–96.
- Sierz, Alex. "Interview with Alan Moloney." www.channel4.com/culture/microsites/B/beckett/maloney_interview.html. No date, accessed March 2009.
- Voigts-Virchow, Eckart. "Face Values: Beckett Inc., The Camera Plays and Cultural Liminality." *Journal of Beckett Studies* vol. 10, nos. 1/2, 2000/2001, pp. 119–135.

Џонатан Бигнел

Kag je Бекет на филму мирирао на телевизију

Резиме

Британски телевизијски програм Канал 4, учествовао је у продукцији *Бекеџа на филму* (2001), пројекта прављења филмских верзија свих Бекетових комада писаних за позориште. Филмови су приказани у биоскопима на разним странама света, у Лондону и Њујорку, али су од почетка били предвиђени и за мигрирање на медијум телевизије. Канал 4 је 2001. емитовао серијал адаптација *Бекеџа на филму* рано или касно увече, за просечну породичну публику, али његово позиционирање није претерано водило рачуна о нормалној програмској схеми. Тематска неповезаност међу драмама, као и остали програми овог канала, једнако као и неуобичајено време емитовања, допринели су малој гледаности као и збрци око тога каквом гледалишту су ове драме биле намењене. Потом је *Бекеџ на филму* мигрирао наново, кад су 2004. комади били предвиђени за емитовање у образовним програмима школских телевизија, током јутарњих термина. То је било намењено средњошколској омладини која је учила о Бекетовим драмама на часовима енглеског или историје позоришта. За сваку драму био је назначен узраст групе гледалаца којима је она била намењена, како би се помогло наставницима и родитељима. *Бекеџ на филму* постао је предмет студија. Овај текст анализира како се одвијао процес мигрирања са једног медија на други и од једне врсте гледалаца до друге, и зашто је он значајан. Наш рад показује како су ове међумедијске сеобе дестабилизовале *Бекеџа на филму* као предмет анализе, али он такође показује и опсег до ког Бекетово дело има могућност обраћања различитим публикама, као и његово испуњавање различитих културних улога.

Кључне речи: Бекет, интермедијалност, телевизија, филм, позориште, медији, драма, Британија, Ирска, публика